

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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PASS HARTMAN

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 13433 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ERDA

GERMANTOWN OTTAWA TOKYO BONN BRUSSELS ROME EC BRUSSELS VIENNA 06 MAY

77

QUOTE

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ERDA WASHDC FOR A. GIAMBUSSO AND S. CIANELLA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, FR

SUBJECT: NEW FRENCH LOW ENRICHMENT PROCESS

REF: PARIS 13320

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL OF COGEMA'S
ENRICHMENT DIVISION, THE NEWLY ANNOUNCED FRENCH
ENRICHMENT PROCESS IS A PHYSICO-CHEMICAL EXCHANGE
PROCESS DEMONSTRATED IN THE LABORATORY AND INHERENTLY
UNSUITABLE FOR HIGH URANIUM ENRICHMENT. IT WILL
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REQUIRE FURTHER OPTIMIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION
EFFORTS BEFORE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IS DEMONSTRATED
AND IT DOES NOT IMPACT PLANS FOR THE EURODIF AND CORODIF
ENRICHMENT PLANTS. FRONT-PAGE ARTICLES IN TODAY'S
FRENCH PRESS EMPHASIZE THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS
ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH CAN BE USED AT THE LONDON CONFERENCE
TO UNDERLINE FRENCH DESIRE TO COOPERATE IN ENERGY AND

NONPROLIFERATION AREAS, AND UNDERSCORES FRENCH SCIENTIFIC CAPABILITY. END SUMMARY.

2. CONTACT WITH COGNIZANT OFFICIAL OF COGEMA'S ENRICHMENT DIVISION INDICATES THAT: THE SUBJECT PROCESS IS A PHYSICO-CHEMICAL LIQUID EXCHANGE PROCESS WHICH HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED IN THE LABORATORY; CONDITIONS REQUIRED ARE THUS KNOWN, AND THE EQUILIBRIUM TIMES ARE SUCH THAT IT INHERENTLY CANNOT BE USED FOR HIGH ENRICHMENT PURPOSES. FURTHER OPTIMIZATION WORK AND LARGER INSTALLATIONS ARE NEEDED TO BRING ABOUT COMMERCIALIZATION AND DEMONSTRATE THE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF THE PROCESS. IT WOULD NOT BE COMPETITIVE BEFORE L984-85 AND IT DOES NOT IMPACT PLANS FOR EURODIF AND CORODIF DIFFUSION ENRICHMENT PLANTS. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW PRACTICAL THIS PROCESS IS FOR VERY LARGE-SCALE APPLICATIONS, AND IT WAS ANNOUNCED AT THIS TIME BECAUSE IT APPEARS TO HAVE EXPORT POTENTIAL FOR SMALLER COUNTRIES DESIRING SOME FUEL ENRICHMENT CAPABILITY.

3. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: FRONT-PAGE ARTICLES IN TODAY'S MORNING PRESS MAKE THE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS:

FIGARO: A) IT NOTES THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND CONSIDERS THAT IT OFFERS POLITICAL MILEAGE TO THE PRESIDENT; IT POINTS OUT THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT UNDERSCORES FRENCH SCIENTIFIC CAPABILITY AND WORLD LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE OFFER OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION; B) IT STATES THAT UNDOUBTEDLY COMMERCIALIZATION WILL REQUIRE SEVERAL YEARS, BUT WILL MAKE IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSSIBLE TO EXPORT ENRICHMENT FACILITIES; AND C) IT CONSIDERS THAT NOW THE OSIRAK (THE IRAQIAN RESEARCH REACTOR) PROJECT WILL NOT BE CONSUMMATED.

LES ECHOS: IT NOTES THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT PRESENTS A NEW INITIATIVE 24 HOURS BEFORE THE LONDON MEETING AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESIDENT GISCARD TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN LONDON BY PROPOSING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON THIS PROJECT.

GAMMON.

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER.

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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